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include voters who because of illness or physical disability are unable to attend the polls. Voters expecting to be absent on election day may apply to the clerk of the circuit court of the county in which they reside, not more than thirty nor less than two days before election, for an absent voters ballot to be used at any general, primary or special election. These applications are preserved by the clerk until the official ballots are delivered to him fifteen days before election, when he is required to mail ballots to all voters whose applications are on file. The voter marks the ballot before any officer authorized to administer oaths and having an official seal, but in such manner as not to disclose how he has voted. The ballot is then mailed to the clerk and preserved and sent out with the election supplies to the election inspector. All absent voters ballots must be counted in the precinct in which the elector is a legal resident.

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The Short Ballot—Governor's Messages. The proposal, designated in the New York constitutional convention as a step nearer monarchy, otherwise known as the short ballot, received attention this year from no fewer than ten governors. Some of the executives confined themselves to general approval of the principle of the short ballot. Governor Keyes of New Hampshire merely remarked that while that state stood in less need of the reform than other states, the legislators might find "some of its principles worthy of application." Governor Brough of Arkansas referred to the "splendid short ballot principle," as one to which the constitutional convention might well direct its attention. Governor Hatfield of West Virginia declared, "After nearly four years official experience of the working of our present system, I am more convinced than ever of the desirability of incorporating the short ballot principle into our constitution." Governor Bickette of North Carolina followed his recommendation for a constitutional amendment for the short ballot, with a recognition of some of the standard arguments in its behalf. "It is simply impossible," he said, "for the average man in North Carolina, who reads and takes a live interest in public affairs, to acquaint himself sufficiently with all of the men who run for state administrative offices to pass upon them with any satisfaction to himself." Governor Norbeck of South Dakota also amplified

⁴ Laws, 1917, Chapter 100.

the argument. He said that "one of the evils of the present system is divided and scattered responsibility. The people prefer to hold the governor responsible for the proper conduct of the different departments of the state, though under our present form the governor has not the slightest authority over any of them. Possibly some day, the governor of this state will be authorized and required to select his own cabinet, the same as the President. Certainly it would be a matter of business and common sense that he should select his own legal adviser, the attorney-general; but these matters cannot be brought about except by constitutional amendment, and it is my opinion that the people of this state are not yet ready to accept them. However, I expect to see the change come in the near future."

Governor Neville of Nebraska advocated the short ballot very literally. His recommendation looked to the lessening of the actual number of names on the ballot, at any one election, but not to the lessening of the total numbers of officers actually chosen by the people. He suggested that county officers be elected for terms of four years, at elections to be held in the middle of the presidential term, and that the names of the presidential electors be kept off of the ballot. Such a provision would lessen the state printing bill, and might help a few voters whom a large ballot sheet perplexes, but manifestly, it does not touch the real evil of the long ballot.

The subject of the county ballot was attacked by Governor Capper of Kansas. He threw out the suggestion of commission government for counties, and added that several officers could be abolished without so radical a change, necessitating as it would a constitutional amendment. He singled out the office of register of deeds as a useless office, which could well be turned over to the county clerk.

Governor Lowden, of Illinois, besides favoring the abolition and consolidation of a large number of offices and boards, gave his general approval to the short ballot, on the ground that "diffusion of power does not safeguard against official abuse, as was once thought, but only disguises it." He made the excellent point that the need for the short ballot "was never so great it as is under the present primary election laws." Indeed it is safe to say that the direct primary will either kill itself or force the short ballot.

The most specific proposals of short ballot reform were made by Governors Philipp of Wisconsin and Goodrich of Indiana. Governor Philipp advised that the secretary of state, state treasurer and attorney general be appointed by the governor instead of elected. These

officers, he argued, "should be the governor's advisers, and should, therefore, represent the same political views as the governor. It is decidedly injurious to the state government, and therefore, a loss to the people if any of the departments are opposed to the governor's policies, and engage in political schemes to make his administration unpopular with the people."

Governor Goodrich proposed several important changes. He advocated the abolition of numerous offices, and the consolidation of others. He advised that the oil inspection bureau be abolished. He advised that the office of state fish and game commissioner, state board of forestry, state geologist and state entomologist be abolished and their work turned over to a state conservation commission to be created. Of these, the state geologist alone is an elective office. He recommended that the office of state statistician, an elective office, be abolished, and that the statistical work of the office be turned over to the executive department, that the collection and publication of statistics and information be done by the governor, and the bureau of legislative information, and the work of the employment bureau be turned over to the industrial board which administers the workmen's compensation act. "Many thousand dollars," he said, "can be saved by the abolition of this office, and the distribution of the work as indicated." He likewise advised that all legal offices attached to state boards and commissions be abolished, that all legal work of the state be done by the attorney-general's office, and that this office be made appointive.

There were no particularly original suggestions made by these governors, and yet it is clear, if from nothing more than the way in which the standard arguments for the short ballot are repeated, in phrases already becoming hackneyed, that the movement is making headway.

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